

West Nile Virus in Washington State

Status Report and Update for the
Washington State Board of Health
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We are now entering the early season for West Nile. According to the Washington State Department of Health plan (the Brown Book), we should be getting preliminary messages out to the public regarding dead birds, personal protection, and habitat reduction. We are on schedule for these efforts.

Several new activities have been initiated that were not specifically noted in the plan. Those efforts and related data are:

- **10 Essential Services** – Various parties and groups are and will continue to show interest in our progress and activities around WNV. Our efforts have been consolidated into a framework around the 10 Essential Services. This will be one of our predominate methods of describing our work to interested parties (attachment # 1).
- **Hotline** - Department of Health West Nile virus information line can be reached in Thurston County at 360-236-3980 or statewide at 1-866-78VIRUS. This line will be updated as necessary with information on the impact of West Nile virus on Washington. The CDC also offers West Nile virus information via TTY at 1-866-874-2646
- **Web Site** - More information is available on the Department Of Health [West Nile virus Web site](http://www.doh.wa.gov/WNV) (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/WNV>). This site contains links to the other state agencies involved in WNV and mosquito control, such as the Departments of Ecology, Agriculture, and Fish and Wildlife, as well as links to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This Web Site will undergo a major revision in about a month, and then be updated routinely as we progress through the summer.

- **WNV Brochure** – We anticipate 200,000 informational brochures and stuffers (to include in billing statements or other mailings) will be available by April 4. We will distribute these to local health agencies, mosquito control districts, and other interested parties. We already have a request from State Parks for 100,000 of the brochures.
- **Roles and Authorities** – Substantial progress has been made with local health partners on the understanding of roles and authorities. Attachment #2 is a report from PHELF outlining this understanding.
- **Blanket Permit** – We have applied for a statewide National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to allow larviciding to control mosquitoes. Interested agencies and jurisdictions can apply for no fee to the agency to be incorporated under this statewide permit, reducing significant barriers in time and expense to them.
Local EH has strongly endorsed the blanket permit and have indicated a fairly uniform willingness to assist by being a local coordination contact point. This will be enormously helpful in reducing the volume and complexity of process request for inclusion under the statewide NPDES permit. See flow chart - attachment # 3.
- **Resource Guide** – We are completing a comprehensive resource guide for use by state and local agencies with essential contact information, applicable laws, a communication plan, and other relevant data regarding WNV.

Next Steps

Communication Plans – We are finalizing the DOH communication plan, with key messages and links to supporting messages. This plan will link to supporting state and local agencies, and identify key spokespersons for the critical messages. A *weekly message* from the Senior Lead to keep all parties updated should be launched by mid-April.

Internal Coordination – Internal WNV group meetings are occurring every two weeks. Efforts will continue on communication plans, emergency response plans, and continued internal/external coordination. We also need

to expand our circle to include local implementers and sister agencies to assist in an ***advisory group*** as we progress through the mosquito season.

Emergency Response – We will continue the work to define events that might trigger a local or statewide emergency response, and the processes and authorities that will be required. Such an action might be required to authorize broadcast spraying for adult mosquitoes, for example. We will also develop an **Incident Command System** that we can implement should an emergency response be required.

Private Property Access – interest continues in exploring authority for state or local health agencies to **enter onto private property** to conduct surveillance or apply pesticides. This issue faces some potential major opposition, from the State Constitution to public perception. Further work is required to address the legal and political issues and concerns related to this topic.

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